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Marketing and
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Service

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Notice to Trade Fruit and Vegetable Vendor Food Biosecurity Audits

This Notice is to inform vendors of USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Commodity Procurement Program of the intent to tentatively require annual food biosecurity audits for processed products beginning July 1, 2005. This measure is in keeping with the Department's emphasis to add a level of safety to food going to the Federal feeding programs. It is our understanding that some vendors have already added food biosecurity plans to their operation to meet the requests of their other customers. However, we are aware that there are vendors who have only considered implementing a plan, as well as some vendors who have not begun to consider it. To assist vendors in preparing and implementing a plan for the audit, the Processed Products Branch will be conducting an audit at no cost on an **advisory basis** for each processed products fruit and vegetable vendor currently doing business with USDA beginning June 1, 2004 through the end of the year. No contract action will be taken as a result of the audits performed during this period between June 1 and December 31. The advisory results should assist vendors in identifying vulnerable areas that need corrective action prior to the audits conducted after July 1, 2005. It is expected that the food biosecurity audit will be conducted by the Processed Products Branch in conjunction with the annual plant survey audits.

The audit tool is based on the Food and Drug Administration's Guidance for Industry, Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventative Measures Guidance. The guidance is located at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid6.html>. A draft copy of the audit tool may be viewed at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html>.

It is the intention to take a similar action and conduct advisory food biosecurity audits for vendors of fresh fruit and vegetable vendors supplying to USDA by Fall 2004. This action and the audit tool will be announced in advance of its occurrence.

For more information, please contact:
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